DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 053 001 SO 001 265

AUTHOR North, Robert
TITLE Violence: Interpersonal, Intergroup, and International. With Comments.
INSTITUTION Diablo Valley Education Project, Berkeley, Calif.; New York Friends Group, Inc., New York. Center for War/Peace Studies.
PUB DATE 15 Oct 69
NOTE 22p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Decision Making, *Foreign Relations, Human Relations, Interaction Process Analysis, *Intergroup Relations, *Models, Policy Formation, Political Power, Political Science, Systems Approach, *Violence, World Affairs, World Problems
IDENTIFIERS Nation States, Peace, *War

ABSTRACT

This paper takes a holistic view of the conditions and causes of conflict and violence. Beginning with an analysis of interaction and conflict between individuals, the author proceeds to examine its occurrence on the group, organization, and nation-state level. He points out that since all human interaction involves some conflict, we should consider alternative modes for conflict management. Several uni-causes have at times been put forth for war--including biological instinct, a form of psychotic behavior, etc. The line of argument taken here is that national leaders will always try to move their nation in directions which reduce whatever discrepancies they perceive between the state of affairs they believe they are living in, and the state of affairs they prefer. Based on this analysis, the general dynamics of conflict and violence between nations of varying levels of power are examined. The author points out that because of these dynamics, warfare is almost inseparable from the nation state (and empire) system as it has existed with the exception of a few countries such as Sweden, who have chosen to play world politics in a different way. Comments on Prof. North's presentation by Irving Janis and Thomas Milburn accompany the document. Related documents are SO 001 259 through SO 001 267. (JLB)

ED053001

Diablo Valley Education Project Consultant Paper Series

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
ROBERT E. FREEMAN,
CE. WAR/PEACE STUDIES
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

. . . . . .

VIOLENCE: INTERPERSONAL, INTERGROUP AND INTERNATIONAL

Robert North

Institute for the Study of Conflict and Integration
Stanford University

. . . . . .

SP 001 265

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Permission to reprint this paper in part or in full must be obtained from the Center for War/Peace Studies and the Diablo Valley Education Project. Send all requests for permission to reprint or for further information to:

Mrs. Gwyneth G. Donchin
Diablo Valley Education Project
1730 Grove Street
Berkeley, California 94709

Copyright Diablo Valley Education Project October 15, 1969

$ .75

All human relations may be viewed as interlaced by two closely related processes--the conflictual and the integrative (or unifying). To one degree or another these two kinds of interaction appear as soon as--and as long as--two or more individuals are in contact. They disappear only when the parties withdraw and the relationship is completely broken. In this sense it is not realistic to suppose that conflict can be "abolished." Rather, we should consider alternative modes in which conflict can be managed, contained, resolved, or allowed to play itself out.

Whenever two or more individuals or groups come into touch with each other they may choose to make their relationship primarily conflictual or primarily integrative (cooperative supportive, agreed upon). If the initial relationship is primarily conflictual there will nevertheless emerge at least a few minimal strands of understanding and reciprocation--rules of combat, or perhaps only an agreement to disagree. The question also arises whether the conflict is pursued violently or non-violently.

If, on the other hand, the initial relationship is primarily integrative, it is certain that conflict will develop--if for no other reason than by the demands of the association itself as they compete with the preferences or individuals and component groups. Again, a fundamental consideration concerns the presence or absence of violence.

Some degree of community, organization or integration is inherent in the concept of conflict. If the parties in question were not in the same place at the same time, or performing two incompatible functions at the same time, or cooperating to inflict reciprocal injury, there would be no conflict.[1] By joining in conflict, two antagonists may establish relations--however detrimental to each other--where none existed before.[2] It has been only through conflict, in fact, that many peoples of the world have become aware of one another's existence.[3]

Conflicts emerge between individuals, between individuals and organizations or groups, between distinct organizations or groups, between an organization and one or more of its components, or between component parts of a single organization or group.

Almost any aspect of conflict, however destructive, requires interaction between the antagonists, considerable communication, and the establishment and maintenance of many reciprocalities and subtle understandings. Conflict thus functions as a binding element between parties who may previously have had no contact at all.[4]

---

[1] Jessie Bernard, "Parties and Issues in Conflict," Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. I, No. 2 (June, 1957), p. 112.

[2] Lewis A. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956), p. 121.

[3] Quincy Wright, A Study of War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 1016.

[4] Lewis A. Coser, op. cit.

On the other hand, conflict may result in the disruption or destruction of all or certain of the bonds of unity which may previously have existed between the disputants.

A conflict emerges whenever two or more persons seek to possess the same object, occupy the same (physical or status) space, play the same role, maintain incompatible goals or undertake mutually incompatible means for achieving their purposes, and so forth. Whenever one party says "yes" and another party says "no," one says "faster" and the other "slower," one says "left" and the other says "right," one says "good" and the other says "bad," there is an issue for conflict.

Interaction often gives rise to conflict.

Each actor or system (individual, group, organization, nation state, and so forth) is postulated as possessing as an inherent part of its structure a "view of the universe" or an "image"--including some notion or "plan" of its own role and purpose.[5] Behavior or action may be seen as the carrying out of a means-end process which moves the system toward the most highly valued part of the total image.[6] Or, one may view each choice point as offering alternatives with each of which are associated some combination of perceived rewards and penalties. As any actor system carries out its means-end process, a certain number of links (choices or potential choices) will "snag" or "collide" with the links of other actors.

Thus, conflict emerges whenever at least one party perceives that one (or more) of his goals or purposes or preferences or means for achieving a goal or preference is being threatened or hindered by the intentions or activities of one or more other parties. The parties may be seeking to move or expand into the same field or physical space--or, more abstractly, into the same field of influence or behavior.[7]

Perhaps the most important class of conflict processes is the reaction--or Richardson--process in which a movement on the part of one actor "so changes the field of the other that it forces a movement of this party, which in turn changes the field of the first, forcing another move of the second, and so on."[8]

---

[5]Cf. Kenneth E. Boulding, "Organization and Conflict," Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 1, No. 2 (June 1957), p. 125-126, and George A. Miller, Eugene Galanter and Karl H. Pribram, Plans and the Structure of Behavior (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1960).

[6]Ibid, pp. 126-127.

[7]Ibid, p. 124.

[8]Kenneth E. Boulding, Conflict and Defense, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962)

Party A perceives--rightly or wrongly--that he is being threatened or injured by party B. Taking what he considers to be defensive action, A behaves in a way which B perceives as injurious or threatening. When B responds "defensively," A, perceiving now that his initial observations and fears have been validated, increases his activities, and thus the conflict spirals.

As the reciprocal threats and injuries rise, the parties may find no alternative other than to fight it out until one has reduced the other to submission. On the other hand, at some point the penalties associated with an added increment of hostility may appear too great to one or both parties, and the conflict may decelerate. In due course, however, the anxieties, fears and discomforts associated with their basic relationship are likely to become unbearable again, and the spiralling will resume. Essentially, the cold war is such a conflict in that it vacillates between a plateau of minimal, day to day conflict and occasional peaks where the hostile interchange stops just short of largescale violence.

The initial perception of threat or injury may or may not be accurate or justified. Many conflicts arise from what parties <u>think</u> may happen--from their anxieties, prejudices, fears and uncertainties--rather than from any phenomenon that is actually threatening.

Conversely, even where actors are aware of incompatibility, there may be no actual conflict if there is no strong desire on the part of at least one party to occupy a region of its behavior space from which it is excluded by the other.[9] Whether or not competitive situations become conflictual may depend, then, upon whether the incompatibility is perceived and also upon whether the issues involved are considered important by the parties.

Conflict may be essentially non-coercive and non-violent, or it may be coercive or violent on various orders of magnitude. Coercion suggests the threat of force or the implementation of force indirectly applied, or persuasion where the possibility of force is known to be present. Throughout human pre-history and history, hunting and gathering bands of tribes, primitive states, empires, city states, nation states and modern industrial states often have provided a superficial appearance of "peace within" and "violence without." But this is an over-simplification. It is true that bands and tribes tend to rely upon kinship ties rather than force for their cohesion, but even within these organizations coercion and force have frequently been used as domestic sanctions. Certainly on the state and empire levels we are concerned with "violence within" to sanction domestic order and also "violence without" for defense and the protection (and often advancement) of interests.

Organizations may be viewed as instruments for resolving conflicts or for managing them or keeping them within bounds. "Sovereign" organizations tend to rely especially on coercion or force--at least in part--for the maintenance of internal order and cohesion. This is true of empire and nation states. Domestic application of force by the state is frequently referred to as police action. External application of force is often called war.

---

[9] <u>Ibid</u>, p. 5.

A true state, even a primitive one, is distinguished from earlier organizational forms (band, tribe, and the like) by the presence of a specialized, institutionalized arrangement for decision and control. One basis of this government apparatus is the consistent threat of force by a body or persons possessing its monopoly and constituted more or less "legitimately" to use it. This monopoly is normally employed by the king, emperor or other head of state. Personal, non-governmental force is outlawed. The presence of feud, rebellion or even a single murder signifies the absence of state power at that time or place. Historically, virtually all states and empires have depended upon force to ensure domestic law, order and cohesion however much they may differ in the specific ways they have used it, the safeguards they have placed upon its indiscrimate employment, and so forth. States and empires rely upon force or the threat of force to prevent or eliminate the use of force by one domestic component against another domestic component or against the elite "legitimately" constituted to exercise the monopoly.

In this context, external war as employed by states and empires emerges as an institution which, for the evolution of state and empire systems, has probably been adaptive until fairly recently. Whether it continues to be adaptive in an environment of massively destructive weapons is a different question.

Warfare has been so common in human history that it is often attributed to basic "instinct" or is perceived as a biologically determined phenomenon comparable to the satisfaction of sex, hunger, thirst or the need for air or sleep. These are misconceptions--the most powerful counter-evidence being that some societies (however few is immaterial) have persisted for long periods of time without recourse to war. Over centuries and millenia, nevertheless, warfare has emerged as a "normal" function for interpersonal organizations on the state (or empire) level.

Biologically determined needs produce a clear and definite bodily reaction--hunger, thirst, sleepiness or exhaustion, the gasp for air--which demand a specific satisfaction. Various cultures differ in their definition of the circumstances under which satisfaction may be achieved and of the forms that ought to be observed. In some cases these definitions and forms--those governing the satisfaction of sexual needs, for example--become important social values. Once aroused, however, these biologically determined impulses can be fully satisfied only in biologically determined ways--hunger and thirst by ingestion of food and liquid, suffocation by intake of air, fatigue by sleep, and so forth.

Anger, hostility and other negative emotions or affects, on the other hand--while they often contribute to the outbreak of war--do not necessarily demand the exercise of violence for their satisfaction. By and large, indeed, they are discharged by a whole range of alternate activities, or they are transformed into more or less chronic states of more or less repressed hate, vindictiveness, and persisting moods of hostility which give rise, again, to widely varying strategies of overt behavior which may or may not involve violence.

There is also a temptation to explain war in the language of psychopathology, treating it as a form of deviation similar to psychotic behavior on the part

of individuals. This is also a fundamental error.[10] (Kelman, 1965, 6). Any assumption that the causes of war are comparable to the etiology of pathological behavior in the individual is likely to obscure the societal and intersocial dynamics that generate conflicts between nations (Ibid., 7) and the integrative functions of war in the historical past.

The indicators or symptoms of psychotic behavior tend to vary somewhat from culture to culture, the degree of pathology being measured in terms of behavior which large numbers of persons in the society consider inappropriate. Thus, tendencies considered seriously deviant in one culture--polygamy for example--may be considered a matter of personal choice in another society, or perhaps even an indication of conformity. In these terms, warfare could be identified as a psychotic manifestation only in a world community which viewed the resolution of international conflicts through large-scale violence as a serious deviation. In fact, although numerous enclaves of human society have condemned war, there has never been an international consensus of this sort in the whole of human history. Rather, the right of a state to make war as an ultimate means of self help was scarcely questioned until recently--provided other measures had failed or offered no clear prospects of success. The right to make war, indeed, was often used as a final test to distinguish a "sovereign" state from one that was considered "semi-sovereign" or dependent.

Various attempts have been made to distinguish between situations in which large-scale violence is considered justified and those in which such recourse ought to be condemned. Grotius, the first great theorist in international law, Vattel and many others since have identified defense, recovery of property, and punishment of wrong as "just" grounds for warfare. In practice--until recently, at least, and substantially even today--judgment respecting the justice or injustice of particular wars have been highly subjective, each nation tending to justify its own behavior and to date nothing like a world consensus has emerged.

In trying to account for war we must draw an important distinction between the inclinations and motivations of those who set the hostilities in motion--a king, perhaps, or a military leader, the individual or small group making the decision to fight--and those who volunteer or are impressed or recruited into the military forces. In fact, the two may have very little in common. This is not to suggest that the feelings of the populace necessarily have nothing to do with decisions to go to war. Public feelings may contribute to the decision of a king or other leader to declare war; or explain the readiness of a population to support a declaration of war; or promote the willingness of young men to join the armed forces; or a combination of all three. We can even imagine subordinates promoting or initiating unwanted wars, or urging a reluctant leader into a war commitment.

In these terms, either a leader or a follower may be aroused by any one--or any combination--of the factors capable of inducing a man to go to war.

---

[10] Herman C. Kelman (ed.), International Behavior (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965).

Such considerations include individual desire for possession or material gain, response to fear or threat, a feeling of ambition, a desire for glory or a longing to escape. Feminine social pressures have often influenced man to take up arms--sometimes without reference to the issues at stake. Among primitive peoples war is sometimes recognized and valued as a flight from grief. It is also a convenient device for human beings in their search for recognition, prestige and ego expansion.

Strong feelings of ethnocentricism and national identification often impel individuals toward participation in war. Wars of nationalism have always been a powerful force in unifying the cultural group under the same decision and control system (government) and providing it with the same military machine.

No doubt all these considerations help explain the willingness of individuals to become involved in war, but as efforts to account for the phenomenon of warfare they are not very helpful. As pointed out by Herbert Kelman, one cannot "expect that the behavior of a nation will be a direct reflection of the motives of its citizens or even of its leaders."[11]

In large, bureaucratic states especially, the connections between cultural pride and the political aspects of nationalism tend to be considerably weakened. Feelings of ethnocentrism are no longer tied as closely to statism. The national identity o people becomes less a matter of the distinctive culture of the nation and more a matter of their bureaucratic roles. The individual citizen is tied to the state less by emotional symbols than by the ideology of the state as the source of bureaucratic authority. "We do not engage in war against another nation because they possess a different culture or a different set of customs. Otherwise the United States would have fought France rather than Germany in 1916 and 1941. In fact American soldiers in both wars had something of this naive conception and wondered why they were fighting the Germans rather than the French" (Katz, 364).

Feelings of nationalism and differences of habit and culture are frequently invoked to justify or rationalize a war that has been--or is about to be --decided upon for another reason. At this writing an American citizen in his late fifties or early sixties may have been encouraged, at various times in his life, to indulge in anti-German, pro-German, anti-Italian, pro-Italian, anti-Russian, pro-Russian, anti-French, pro-French, anti-Japanese, pro-Japanese, anti-Chinese, pro-Chinese, and various other contradictory and sometimes confusing sentiments. But nationalism and cultural differences are not in themselves sufficient to account for warfare.

War is also explained in terms of a particular economic system--capitalism, for example. And without doubt economic factors have frequently contributed to the outbreak of hostilities. Like other uni-causal explanations, however, it is not adequate. Clearly other considerations are also important. Is it possible to develop a model which accommodates a number of "causes."

---

[11] Ibid, p. 6

Individual human behavior has been accounted for in terms of a tendency to test "input energies"--cognitions of things as they are--against some criteria established in the organism, some preferred state of affairs, and to respond if the result of the test is to reveal an incongruity (or discrepancy). The tendency is to continue responding until the incongruity vanishes. Human behavior is thus identified as the outcome of a need to reduce or close the gap between a real state of affairs, as perceived by the actor, and a preferred state of affairs.[12] The existence of such a gap may be said to give rise to dissatisfaction or tension (used here synonymously).

The tendency of a nation state (or empire), through the nervous systems of its leaders, is also to test "input energies"--cognitions of things as they are--against some criteria, some preferred state of affairs established by themselves, at least in part, and possibly also by their advisors, by their predecessors, and sometimes by the society at large, and to respond if the result of the test is to reveal an incongruity. Nation state (and empire) behavior is thus identified as the outcome of a need on the part of individual leaders--variously shared or not shared by other members of the society--to reduce or close the gap between a real state of affairs (as perceived by the leaders) and a preferred state of affairs. The existence of such a gap may be said to give rise to dissatisfaction or tension within the decision and control apparatus of the state or empire (variously shared or not shared by other members of the society). Normally, the overriding criterion for a national (or imperial) leadership involves the security and survival of the state (or empire)--though different leaders may differ markedly in the means they use in pursuit of these basic ends.

If the information which proceeds backward from national (or imperial) performance to the leadership is "able to change the general method and path of performance" it can be inferred that individual leaders have learned. To the extent that the capability for using this information about the environment and about operations on the environment in order to deal with that environment more effectively is shared by other members of the society, stored, socialized, institutionalized and passed along to subsequent generations, we may infer that the nation state has "learned."

The behavior of a nation state--effected through its leaders and their agents--may increase or inhibit the capabilities of the state and its probability of survival. In general, the greater the amount of resources available, the closer the correspondence between reality and the leadership's cognition of it, and the greater the ability of individual leaders (and the society at large) to learn, the higher the probability that the nation state will survive.

The greater a nation state's control of or influence over its external and internal environments--subject to laws of logistic constraint--the greater the probability that it will survive. More specifically, the probability of a state's survival is enhanced--subject, again, to logistic

---

[12]George A. Miller, Eugene Galanter and Karl H. Pribram, Plans and the Structure of Behavior (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc. 1960), p. 26.

constraints--with increases in possession, access to, and ability to mobilize and transform resources; with its ability to secure itself from outside invasion and coercion; with increases in the ratio of domestic per capita production to consumption; and with increases in the level of domestic order and cohesion, especially if achieved consensually, with a minimum of coercion.

Some external functions are performed at the expense of internal functions and vice versa. Hence, the greater the expenditure of energy and resources externally, beyond a certain threshold determined by domestic requirements, the greater will be the probability of domestic instability. And the greater the expenditure of energy and resources internally, beyond a certain threshold determined by external requirements, the greater will be the probability of instability in external relations and the danger of coercion, attack or conquest from the outside. In general, the greater the domestic instability, the greater will be the probability of a change in leadership (perhaps a revolution). On the other hand, up to a critical threshold largely determined internally, the greater the threat from the outside, the greater will be the domestic cohesion and stability. Beyond that threshold--which tends to be a function of severe loss of internal ability to mobilize and effectively apply resources (internally, externally, or both)--the greater the outside threat the greater will be the domestic instability, the greater will be the probability of a change in leadership and, in extreme cases, the greater will be the probability of revolution, surrender, or possibly a social, economic and political collapse.

The greater the capabilities of a nation state, relative to the capabilities of other nation states with which it interacts, the stronger is likely to be the predisposition of its leaders to seek, achieve and maintain external capabilities greater than any other state in its system--although, again, there may be marked differences in the means which different nations, through their leaders, prefer and rely upon. In general, the stronger any two nations, the less the differences of capability between them, the less the functional distance between them, and the more frequent their interactions, the more likely they will be to rely upon the exchange of threats and the application of armed force--with the proviso that, the more frequent their nonviolent interactions in the past (and the less frequent their recourse to reciprocal violence) the less likely they will be to rely upon armed force in the present and future.

For the leaders of a nation state there are many sources of tension or dissatisfaction. Some of these are associated with circumstances of their personal lives: others emerge from the condition of their respective political roles, statuses and fortunes: others emerge from conflicting domestic and external demands, the necessity for choosing between "guns and butter;" and still others are an outcome of discrepancies between the real state of affairs--domestic or external--of the nation they govern and the state of affairs that is preferred for it.

Often it is exceedingly difficult to determine how much of the tension or dissatisfaction of a leader is attributable to any one source over another. In general, however, we may assume that the fortunes of a head of state are so inextricably intertwined with the nation's survival that he will seek,

within the channels of his own perception of the situation and in line with his own capabilities, to achieve some balancing of demands and supports from his own populace with demands and supports from other nations. In other words, he will normally try to advance the interests of the state, as he views them, and act in the interests of state security as he perceives it. However, the successful balancing of these many different demands and supports may be, in practice, an exceedingly difficult task.

In seeking to locate sources of dissatisfaction or tension, we--as observers and investigators--must distinguish carefully between, on the one hand, objectively existing inconguities between the actual state of affairs and that preferred by a national leadership, and those incongruities, on the other hand, that are perceived by a national leadership but which do not seem to have substance in reality. Both types of discrepancy, the "real" and the "merely perceived," may provide sources for leadership dissatisfaction or tension. It will be important to discriminate among (a) discrepancies perceived by the leadership that are more or less congruent with discrepancies that objectively exist; (b) discrepancies perceived by the leadership which seem to us as investigators to have no substance in fact; (c) real-world discrepancies which apparently are not perceived by the leadership; (d) real-world discrepancies that are differentially perceived by various individual leaders; (e) situations in which various leaders have different perceptions of discrepancies which do not seem to have any substance in fact; and so forth.

Whatever the sources, we may expect increments of dissatisfaction or tension to impel the selection by the leaders of some activity or set of activities calculated to alter the environment to some degree or another and thus to reduce or eliminate the discrepancy (or their perception of it) and their feelings of dissatisfaction or tension.

Insofar as the leaders of a nation state may be assumed to act in the interests of state survival and security, we may expect (a) differences in the capabilities of states and (b) discrepancies between the objective capabilities of a state and the prestige and status accorded it by the international system to function as major sources of tension among national leaderships.

In seeking to reduce dissatisfactions and tensions generated by perceived discrepancies, individuals and--through their leaders--nation states tend to build up habitual ways of doing things. With respect to interpersonal groups, including nation states, these activities tend to be social, economic (allocation and exchange of resources), political (decision and control), and technological (the organization and application of knowledge and skills). Obviously these categories of behavior are highly interactive, and an undertaking which involves any considerable number of people is likely to involve all three.

The organic components of a nation state are in continual change, being subject--at varying rates--to processes of growth, decay and extinction. Inorganic resources are subject to depletion. Human technology in a broad sense--the organization and application of knowledge and skills--also tends

to proceed at differing rates from individual to individual, society to society, and over time for both individuals and societies. Such changes tend to alter human relations within a nation state and also the balance of relationships between two (or more) nation states. In this way changes and differential rates of change continually affect the location, nature, and dimensions of various dissatisfaction or tension-generating discrepancies. The levels and rates of change of human populations and of technology, as defined above, seem to be of particular importance in these respects. In any case, the international system is always in more or less flux because of these differential changes.

The meaning of an increase in population depends upon that population's productivity. If productivity is low, an increase in population can be a severe constraint. An increase in population indicates an increase in consumption and an increase in demands upon the resources and national product of a state. These demands can be met through an increase of resources (discovery of new deposits, acquisition of new territory and so forth), or by means of advances in technology (the organization and application of knowledge and skills) which enhance the availability and usefulness of existing resources, or through a combination of both.

A population increase combined with a commensurate growth in technology will tend to increase national capabilities and encourage an expansion of activity in a state's external environment.

Given two or more nation states interacting with each other, we may expect their individual behaviors and the pattern of their reciprocal behaviors to be influenced (a) by their respective dimensions and resources (including populations), (b) by respectively perceived discrepancies, and (c) by the experience of their respective actions and transactions of the past as remembered or recorded and as built into their institutions and habit patterns.

In setting goals--the preferred and pursued, but as yet unattained state of affairs--national leaders may be expected to draw heavily upon analogies with the past and upon comparisons of their own nation with other nations in its system. They will try to move their nation in directions that will reduce discrepancies between the real state of affairs and the preferred state of affairs. However, in pursuing what they strongly prefer for the nation (benefits, rewards, satisfactions) they may well have to undertake certain activities and suffer some consequences that are disagreeable or injurious (costs, penalties, punishments, dissatisfactions) which they would rather avoid but which they are willing to undertake (or suffer) with the expectation that such activities or consequences are to one degree or another prerequisite to the achievement of the overridingly preferred state of affairs. They will also risk the incurrence of certain undesirable outcomes which they hope--with skill and a measure of good fortune--they may successfully avoid.

National leaders may compare the present state of their nation with memories of a better past, or they may compare their nation with another nation, or they may construct an abstract model for the future. They may seek to reestablish the nation in the power and grandeur they perceive it as having enjoyed during some Golden Age of the past, or to surpass its rival in the present, or to

rule the world, or perhaps a combination of these.

Frequently, the strongest nation state--through its leaders--tends to measure itself against the second strongest nation state--often in terms of comparative rates of growth.[13] Because of its position, the strongest state often feels compelled to defend the status quo, and this inclination is likely to contribute to its involvement in "police actions" and wars against dissatisfied nations aggressively in search of a new order.

The second strongest nation state--through its leaders--tends to measure itself against the strongest and against the third strongest. In some configurations the second strongest nation state may be a candidate for the role of dissatisfied and aggressive challenger of the status quo. Other nation states tend to measure themselves, at least hypothetically, against the strongest nation state, but often more immediately against both the state that is next stronger and the one that is next weaker.

1. The higher the capabilities of a nation state--and the higher its rates of population and technological growth--the stronger will be its tendency to compete with other nations in its system.

2. The more frequently two nations interact and the more nearly equal their capabilities the higher will be the tension felt by both leaderships and the more likely it is that they will compete for power and influence--although a long history of good relations will inhibit this tendency.

   (a) A lessening of the difference in strength and effectiveness between the stronger nation and weaker nation generates an increase of tension among leaders of the stronger nation.

   (b) A lessening of the difference in strength and effectiveness between the stronger nation and the weaker nation enhances the expectations, anxieties and fears of possible failure on the part of the leadership of the weaker nation.

   (c) At the point where the weaker nation, B, overtakes the stronger nation, A, each additional increment in B's strength will generate for B's leaders a perceived discrepancy between nation B's new level of strength and its previously ascribed status; each such additional increment will also produce tension to the extent that the leaders of B perceive that nation A is preparing to reestablish its previous superiority.

   (d) At the point where the weaker nation, B. overtakes the stronger nation, A, each additional increment in B's strength will generate for A's leadership a tension stimulating efforts to reestablish A's superiority.

---

[13]The comparisons may be in general rather than statistical terms, but the leaderships of Major Powers often make remarkably detailed comparisons and future projections.

With respect to competing nations, then, tension is likely to arise in at least three major ways:

T_1 = tension felt by the stronger nation as the weaker nation tends to overtake it on a salient dimension.

T_2 = tension felt by the weaker nation as it tends to overtake the stronger nation on a salient dimension.

T_3 = tension felt by the weaker nation as it loses ground after a period of overtaking the stronger nation.

It becomes evident, in terms of these propositions, that once a weaker nation state B engages in competition to overtake and surpass a stronger nation A on any salient dimension, it has in effect locked itself into a situation where it cannot escape considerable tension. That is, to the extent that weaker state B gains upon A, both leaderships suffer tension. On the other hand, to the extent that B gains and then falls off, the leadership of B also suffers tension. If nation A overtakes nation B, the same dynamics pertain, but the roles are reversed. B's leadership has the possibility of experiencing lower tension insofar as it increases its lead over A. Under these circumstances, however, we may expect A's tension to increase. And to the extent that A displays evidence of possibly overtaking B and reestablishing its (A's) dominance, both A and B may be expected to experience tension.

We have referred also to a further source of tension:

T_4 = tension felt by a nation that perceives that its real capability is greater than its ascribed capability, rank or status.

Among other considerations are the following:

3. The more rapid the technological growth beyond a point of minimal domestic stability the stronger will be the tendency--early in the processes of national growth or what is often called modernization--for the leadership to avoid "entangling alliances" and military involvement in the world arena, but to use every capability at its command--including military force--to compete against other nations and gain advantage on a local or regional level.

4. The more consistently a rising population combines with an economic and technological upsurge, the more accelerated will be the growth trends and the greater will be the inclination for the national leadership to achieve and maintain external capabilities at least equal to, if not greater than, those of any other state in the system; to maintain powerful military establishments; to become involved in international politics in many parts of the globe; and often to proclaim responsibility for keeping the international peace and protecting the rights and security of lesser powers in which they have an interest.

In the contempory context such nations which have clearly reached Great Power status frequently employ elaborate information or propaganda apparati, trade and aid programs,various subversive and other interventions in attempts to influence or control other states and thus to enhance control or influence over the international environment. Like lesser states, however, and in spite of their greater resources, Great Powers are also constrained by their limitations and domestic requirements. In efforts to constrain, influence or control their external environments, therefore, they not only try to maximize their own individual strength, but also tend to seek alliances. The characteristics and behaviors of these alliances depend to a large extent upon the characteristics of the various nation states in the system and especially upon their relative capabilities. Alliance formation may also be strongly affected by grievances--as when one state has increased its territory at the expense of another. In seeking alliances, national leaderships will look for a maximal increase in capability consistent with what is perceived as bearable constraints and other costs.

Each Great Power--whether trying to achieve a dominating position in the hierarchy or to preserve a dominance it has already obtained--tends to collide with other Great Powers. Marshalling its capabilities, pursuing its goals and interacting with other countries, the leaders of a Great Power (or of a lesser Power) may carry out strategies--and perceive and respond to the strategies of others--largely in comparative advantage, non-zero sum terms; or as if they thought the game were zero sum; or in some combination of these. If we were to construct a scale between a zero sum pole and a precisely equal advantage pole, we would find the strategies of most leaderships operating characteristically somewhere on one side or the other of mid-point--but varying with tension levels and other considerations.

5. In general, the higher the tension felt by the leaders of a nation state (and also, in many instances, by the populace), the stronger the tendency toward operating as if the game were zero sum, at least in response to those countries which are perceived by the leadership as antagonists.

Historically, it has happened, not infrequently, that national leaders--as suggested above--have chosen conquest as a means for acquiring additional resources or in order to establish domination and supremacy. In other cases--of which World War I is probably a good example--competition for power has set the conditions for an outbreak for which the more direct stimuli are incidents or provocations and hostilities emerging from reaction processes. As the nations begin trading threats, these threats themselves shape the nature and intensity of the interchanges, and the reaction process begins to generate dynamics of its own--to a point where earlier issues, peculiar to the basic, longer range competition of the nations may be almost lost sight of.

It has often been observed that if the leaders of country A, in a high tension situation, perceive--rightly or wrongly--that their nation has been threatened by country B, they are likely to undertake defensive responses calculated to punish or deter. When the leaders of country B perceive these

measures directed against their nation, they are likely to respond with "defensive" measures of their own which, perceived by the leaders of A, "prove" to them that their first perception was correct and incite them to take further defensive measures. This spiralling behavior has been called the Richardson, or reaction process.[14]

6. The higher the tension in an international system the stronger will be the probability that an incident will be perceived by one actor or another as injurious, threatening or provocative.

7. Once a reaction process has set in, the higher the tension the stronger will be the probability that the issues of earlier competition will be obscured, that the actors will look for threats and respond with counter-threats, and that acts of violence or potential violence will increase.

8. The higher the tension--beyond a certain critical threshold--felt by a nation (or two or more nations) in a reaction process, the greater will be the possibility that any aggressive activity--whatever, objectively, its likely consequences may be--will seem preferable to the leaders of that nation than the increasingly difficult tension itself; hence, the higher the tension generated by a reaction process the greater will be the probability of violence no matter what the consequences.

9. The higher the tension felt by the decision-makers in one nation state (A) and the more intense the interaction with another nation state (B), the higher will be the probability that the leaders of B will experience increasing tension and that interchanges between A and B will contain higher levels of threat of violence or violence.

10. As tension increases in the interaction process, time will be perceived by the leaders involved as an increasingly salient factor in decision-making, and they will become increasingly concerned with elements of the immediate future rather than with more long range considerations and possible outcomes.[15]

11. As tension increases, the leaders involved in an interactive process will perceive their own range of alternatives becoming more restricted than those of their adversaries, and the range of alternatives for their allies becoming more restricted than the range available to their adversaries.[16]

---

[14]Lewis F. Richardson, Arms and Insecurity (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1960).

[15]Ole R. Holsti, "The 1914 Case," The American Political Science Review, Vol. LIX, No. 2 (June 1965), pp. 365-378.

[16]Ibid.

12. As tension increases, leaders in a reaction process will perceive the range of alternatives open to themselves becoming narrower and the range of alternatives open to their adversaries expanding.[17]

13. The higher the tension in a reaction process, the heavier will be the overload upon channels of communication, the more stereotyped will be the information content of the messages, the greater will be the tendency to rely upon extraordinary or improvised channels of communication, and the higher the proportion of intra-coalition--as against inter-coalition--communication.[18]

Obviously, not all escalations continue to escalate--or we would be at war all the time. The "unwinding" or de-escalation of the reaction process normally comes about because one side or the other (or both) decides that the costs (or probable costs, risks) are too high. However,

14. The higher the tension, the higher the probability that at least some of the leaders involved will come to see war and even a high probability of defeat as preferable to the uncertainties of crises or as the only way out.

Because of these various dynamics, warfare is almost inseparable from the nation state (and empire) system as it has existed so far. Only a relatively few formerly Great Powers--such as Sweden--have chosen to play the game of world politics in a different way.

---

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

IRVING JANIS: "SYMPTOMS OF GROUPTHINK"
COMMENTS ON ROBERT NORTH'S PRESENTATION,
"VIOLENCE: INTERPERSONAL, INTERGROUP AND INTERNATIONAL"*

One of the central points that runs through Professor North's paper is that national leaders will always try to move their nation in directions which reduce whatever discrepancies they perceive between the real state of affairs they believe they are living in and the state of affairs they prefer. What we have to deal with here are problems of policy-making by, as North pointed out, the ruling elites of large states who have to make decisions about how they are going to use their resources, whether or not to escalate violence, how to prevent crises, how to deal with crises as they arise and so on.

Now the particular type of inquiry I want to talk about involves a series of case studies of what could be called "historic fiascoes." The policy decisions that led to these fiascoes (examples: Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Korean War decision, the Chamberlain government, appeasement of Hitler, escalation of the Vietnam war) have in common the fact that each was made by a small number of individuals who formed a cohesive group sharing certain norms, certain outlooks and certain misperceptions in looking at the enemy. This fits in very nicely with one of Professor North's main points--that psychological reality is the reality we have to be concerned with: how the policy makers perceive their opposite numbers, not what the reality may actually be, as assessed by outside objective observers.

It seems that the members of a decision-making group become strongly cohesive whenever there are stresses that are being shared by all the members of the group. Of course, any basic decision has its intense stresses, particularly if it's in an international crisis situation. And in a crisis, when the decision-makers form a cohesive group they become motivated to avoid being too harsh in their judgments of their colleagues. They begin to adopt a soft line of criticism instead of making their conflicting views explicit.

Conflict within the policy-making group in such situations, however, has a very positive value. It can also be corrosive, if there are no ways of resolving it, if you have such a wide disparity of values and so on. But a certain amount of diversity and a willingness to speak up to differences in values and differences in outlook certainly can be valuable. But in a cohesive group we often see the opposite kind of tendency, where everybody begins to get soft and uncritical in his thinking. The members move in the direction of trying to share a nice,

---

*Irving Janis, Visiting Scholar (from Yale University), Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley. *These comments were made at the Inquiry, "The Utilization of Scholarship in Teaching about War, Peace and Social Change," March 1970, San Francisco, sponsored by the Center for War/Peace Studies, in cooperation with the American Orthopsychiatric Association, the International Studies Association and the Diablo Valley Education Project.*

friendly consensus where there is little bickering, where everybody can share the same values and the same estimates about the risks that are being taken and the same ideas about the best means for achieving their values.

I use the term "groupthink" to refer to a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive group, when consensus-seeking becomes so dominant that it tends to override the usual forms of critical thinking that members of a group would be capable of engaging in. The symptoms of "groupthink" may be familiar to any of you who have looked into small group psychology. First, the most dominant trend is a shared illusion of invulnerability about risk-taking: "We're a great group," "What we do is fine because we have decided to do it," "Everything is going to be all right." Schlesinger makes this point very clearly about the Kennedy administration group and the Bay of Pigs decision. Everything had been going our way, he said. We felt we couldn't lose, and therefore, even though we could see that there were lots of things wrong with it, we felt somehow, just as everything else had come about (Kennedy got the nomination, he got elected, so on) this too is going to go our way.

Second there is an unquestioned belief in the inherent morality of the in-group. The dominant theme is "We are a good group." And, of course, anybody who is being dealt with as an out-grouper is likely to be immoral "if he doesn't go along with us." But above all, there is no need to consider the moral implications, the ethical aspects of what is being done--or even the quasi-ethical aspects such as using up the few remaining resources that our earth may have.

Third--the counter-part of number two--any out-group regarded as the enemy is evil and is too weak or too stupid to be able to deal effectively with the very clever plan being plotted by the in-group. For example, in dealing with somebody like Castro, the group members assume that he is much too weak to be able to do anything about a handful of men that is going to be landing in Cuba, and that in any case, the invaders could always escape to the mountains to join up with the guerillas and help overthrow Castro, who is too weak to survive anyhow. Nobody bothered to take a look at a map to notice that the Bay of Pigs happens to be separated by one hundred miles of impenetrable marshland from the Escambro Mountains, which is where the guerillas were hiding out.

A further characteristic of "groupthink" is a sense of unanimity within the group. And this is exactly where the lack of critical thinking comes in, because it is an illusion of unanimity that the members of this group, as loyal group members, try to maintain. In order to maintain it, they have to make certain assumptions, such as the fact that the silent members of a group are going along with what the more talkative members are saying.

As for the dissenters, they remain silent. In order to avoid deviating from the group's norms, they impose self-censorship. For example, Bowles attended one of the Bay of Pigs planning sessions.

because Rusk couldn't be there, and as Deputy Secretary of State, Bowles was his replacement. Bowles was shocked to hear the assumptions that were being made as the group talked about this crazy plan. But he didn't say a word. Nor did Schlesinger speak up. Schlesinger wrote a few memos which were perfectly fine; Bowles, too, wrote a memo which he gave to Rusk, who promptly buried it in the State Department files. Schlesinger describes his own reaction as a fear of disapproval, a fear that these people would turn against him, that he would no longer be regarded as a loyal member of the group. And not only that, a negative comment from him would reflect badly on Kennedy because Schlesinger, as a Harvard professor in the presence of military and CIA people, would embarrass the leader if he were to speak up and raise various kinds of objections. Now Fulbright was invited to one meeting and did speak up. But what he said got a beautiful reception from the White House group: it fell absolutely dead and everybody went on talking as though he had never said anything.

Finally, you get the emergence of self-appointed mind-guards within the group to protect the minds of the policy-makers from any damage by fresh ideas which might question their assumptions. A good example is Rusk's handling of Bowles' memorandum. Bowles stated very specifically what he found objectionable to the plan, and Rusk looked at the memo and said, "Look, there is no need for us to transmit this because Jack Kennedy is perfectly aware of all these things himself, and he has already said that it's not going to be a real invasion. It's just going to be a quiet little infiltration." That had become the slogan: a quiet little infiltration. It would be buried on the inside pages of the New York Times somewhere, and nobody would even notice. They maintained this all through the days when the New York Times was already having front page stories about the planned invasion, two weeks before it was scheduled. But that was the way the group conceptualized it. Anyhow, that was the reason Rusk gave for suppressing Bowles' memo, so it never got fed into the system.

What I am proposing, then, is a level of analysis that fits in with the kind of schemes that Professor North gave, but looks at the matter from a different standpoint. This is not from an individual standpoint, which is where the Osgood model comes from, dealing with the effects of communications and threats and so on. And it is not at the level of institutions and nations, which is the level of analysis that Professor North was talking about when he gave us the various formulas about population, technology and the sciences.

I'm proposing to look at some of these problems from the standpoint of the group of decision-makers and in terms of the way they interact to make policy. Now, if we contrast the series of fiasco-type decisions with the kind of decisions that don't lead to fiascos and that don't show the symptoms of "groupthink" (examples: Cuban Missile Crisis, the Marshall Plan decision) we have a possible way of ferreting out some of the conditions that may prevent stupid risk-taking. It's this kind of inquiry that I propose pursuing.

A few hypotheses have emerged: one that is very clear is that when you have a secretive group, when you have a group that becomes very exclusive, then all the conditions for forming a cohesive group and engaging in "groupthink" are there. And the concept of "need to know" is usually utilized in such a way as to keep the decisions very close to a small group of people who are not experts in the area. When, for example, the Chief of Intelligence in the State Department approached Rusk to say, "I just accidentally heard from Allen Dulles that there is a plan to invade Cuba, and I think that our people on the Cuban desk ought to be in on this," Rusk said, "Oh no, this is too sensitive a decision. We can't have any of those experts in on this." Obviously, one way to prevent that sort of situation is to set up multiple groups: each representative of a department in a central group who meets at the White House returns to his home group, where properly qualified people brief him and discuss the issue; then he goes back to the White House to represent his group's point of view in the central body. A tradition of that kind, instead of the one we have now of secrecy, would go a long way toward preventing exclusiveness and "groupthink."

The absent-leader procedure that Kennedy innovated in the Cuban Missile Crisis is another way to reduce the chances of groupthink. And above all, if the leader is present when the group members are just beginning to discuss a new policy issue his abstaining from setting the norm is essential. If the leader absents himself or merely listens and abstains from announcing his own viewpoint until everybody in the group has been allowed to sound off, that again might prevent some groupthink tendencies from giving rise to a premature consensus, before the alternatives have been explored.

Various special devices we are becoming familiar with, such as role-playing devices and role reversals, are additional means which could be introduced into these policy-making groups to get them, for example, to break down stereotypes regarding the enemy.

There is more detail to be filled in here, of course, but this will give you an indication of what I think is a promising set of concepts and a promising way of plugging in what we already know about group dynamics into an analysis of the policy-making groups.

THOMAS MILBURN: COMMENTS ON ROBERT NORTH'S PRESENTATION, "VIOLENCE: INTERPERSONAL, INTERGROUP AND INTERNATIONAL"*

The whole North investigation tends to be holistic, global or systems-oriented. I think one of the reasons that it is possible for him to have such objectivity and detachment as he talks about a number of different situations is that the situations that he deals with are remote in time. But also, he is willing to be systems-oriented rather than take a position of one of the sides, one of the parties to the conflict. In one sense this can be regarded as ecological.

In North's research he does suggest that there are a number of different factors (note his fifty-seven variables). Wars have many causes, and if wars have many causes, simplistic solutions are inapplicable and inappropriate. One of the things he is saying in various ways is "forget too much simplicity or forget simple solutions for dealing with war." However much we might like them, they don't fit. And, North suggests, it is the nature of the interaction, of the conflict itself as a primitive system, which makes conflict so difficult to handle.

There were two main sets of factors that Bob North talked about. One, of course, was the ecological variables. And certainly these look exceedingly important. We can note that the developed countries have more wars than underdeveloped countries, are more susceptible to violent wars than the underdeveloped countries, which should be the case if the development and utilization of energy and resources are antecedent conditions for conflict.

It has been only for a brief time that Bob North and his research team have been saying something about ecological factors as significant determinants of violence, especially global violence, in conflict situations. I regard that as optimistic, because it seems to me that we haven't had a chance to do something with these factors yet. Now we are more aware of the need to have populations stabilized, to recycle other products through the system, to stabilize and decrease the total amount of energy we use, and so on.

The other set of factors that Bob North talked about was the "functionally autonomous Richardson equation" sort of things: The arms race, the Crisis Processes, etc. In respect to this, it seems to me that it is probably worth defining crisis. There are some key aspects. One is the notion that crises particularly involve the nation of "perceived threat" to important values. There is perceived threat to valued entities,

---

*Thomas Milburn, Department of Psychology, De Paul University. These comments were made at the Inquiry, "The Utilization of Scholarship in Teaching about War, Peace and Social Change," March 1970, San Francisco, sponsored by the Center for War/Peace Studies, in cooperation with the American Orthopsychiatric Association, the International Studies Association and the Diablo Valley Education Project.

to values that we have - and they have to be important values to have a crisis. Secondly, there is time pressure. There is pressure to make a decision in a hurry, which I think is relevant to the small group processes that Irving Janis talked about. And thirdly, there is no ready-made programmed solution. We can't go and look in the book and say, "Oh, this is how you take out an appendix." If we can do that, it's not a crisis.

With those three factors - threat, time pressure, and an unprogrammed quality - making a crisis, it is worth noting that there are a number of distortions; that is, there is a group of factors which distort man's effectiveness in times of crisis and makes the situation less stable than otherwise. We know there is a time distortion. Time becomes highly salient: now is forever; there is no tomorrow. One's own alternatives seem restricted in a crisis situation, and our opponent's alternatives look less restricted, making our situation look more desperate. And there is a tendency for thinking to be more concrete in crisis than at other times. That is, in a crisis ambiguous threats tend to be more disturbing than in ordinary times. Ambiguity, which may ordinarily be hard for us to tolerate, is harder to tolerate in crisis than at other times. And there are, of course, related factors: for example, defensiveness, out of the fear of being wrong, of being scared, of making the wrong actions under pressure. These kinds of crisis reactions--or distortions--contribute to the difficulties beyond what might otherwise be the case.

What I'm suggesting is that North's model is applicable to more than just relations between nation-states. It is applicable within systems, and is applicable between groups as well. It is also supported by convergences, not only in political science data, but from psychological and sociological data as well. Some people have suggested that North's position is anti-U.S.. It seems to me that it is also anti-China or Russia or England or any other nation-state. What his position says is that we have to have new social invention, that we can't be limited merely to the nation-state. And it is probably easier to think of adding new forms to existing ones than of dismantling the present framework.

To summarize, Bob North has taken a holistic, ecological, gestalt, systems orientation for his theme, which has permitted him a kind of detachment and objectivity that otherwise would be exceedingly difficult. And he has pointed out two kinds of factors, one of which is especially a systems property--namely the ecological one. The crisis aspect looked like a special case of sub-optimization too, but he has made important contributions to the understanding of crises, as has Janis. Much of this work looks as if it may be highly generalizable, including generalizable across levels of social complexity: it is not only true globally or at the nation-state level, but also in relations between groups and among individuals. So, its scientific merit is considerable.